

VZCZCXRO1635
OO RUEHGI RUEHMA RUEHROV
DE RUEHKH #1312/01 2421122
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 291122Z AUG 08
FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1747
INFO RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE
RUCNIAD/IGAD COLLECTIVE
RHMFISS/CJTJF HOA

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 04 KHARTOUM 001312

DEPT FOR AF/SPG, A/S FRAZER, SE WILLIAMSON
NSC FOR BPITTMAN AND CHUDSON
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU
DEPT PLS PASS USAID FOR AFR/SUDAN

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [ASEC](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KPKO](#) [SOCI](#) [AU](#) [UNSC](#) [SU](#)
SUBJECT: UNAMID DEPLOYMENT UPDATE

11. (SBU) SUMMARY: On August 26 and 27, six senior leaders of UNAMID separately discussed UNAMID deployment issues with poloffs. Most officials dismissed 80% deployment by December 31 as unrealistic, but predicted this goal may be reached by March 2009 if UNAMID completes upgrades to Darfur's airports allowing 24-hour access to UNAMID. These officials also discussed a "light deployment plan," phase IV security, staffing difficulties, and equipment and transportation issues. END SUMMARY.

12. (SBU) Polchief and poloff met the following UNAMID officials in El-Fasher headquarters on August 26-27:

- Acting Deputy Director of Mission Support Wolfgang Weiszegger,
- Chief of Plans, J5 Colonel NMT Stafford
- Chief of Staff John Alstrom
- Deputy Joint Special Representative (D/JSR) for Operations and Management Hocine Medili
- Director of Public Information Kamal Saiki
- Political Officer to JSR Adada, Adam Day

DEPLOYMENT GOALS

13. (SBU) Chief of Staff Almstrom was the most optimistic official about deployment, stating that UNAMID has a "reasonable chance" of reaching its 80% deployment goal by the end of 2008. DJSR for Operations and Management, Hocine Medili, was less confident saying, "we might not reach 80% by the end of the year, but we will not miss it by many months." Other officials hinted that TCCs (Troop Contributing Countries) may back away from their commitments, as their deployment dates are pushed farther back. Both Weiszegger, the Director of Mission Support and Day, Adada's chief political officer, stated that Thai troops may withdraw as their deployment date is delayed and visa/passport issues plague some TCCs.

14. (SBU) The J5 Chief of Planning portrayed deployment as dependent on the arrival of contingent-owned equipment (COE) and the completion of necessary engineering work. "The military planner is the last person in the chain," noted Stafford, and added that the slow movement of COE "is the killer." Stafford cited the lengthy distance between Port Sudan and Darfur, the poor road infrastructure, and the extreme weather in Sudan all as significant challenges in COE transportation. Stafford said that there are at least four new camps being built in each sector, also putting a major strain on resources. (Note: Stafford provided an electronic copy of a UNAMID Force Deployment Brief to poloffs. This document will be sent to AF/SPG, USUN, and the office of the special envoy on Monday, September 1. End Note.)

15. (SBU) Adam Day cautioned that UNAMID "fudged the numbers" to reach its 80% deployment goal by the end of 2008. Day warned that this goal focuses on troops and not police, and that as the Kalma camp attack demonstrated, Darfur's insecurity requires law enforcement as much as peacekeeping.

LIGHT DEPLOYMENT

16. (SBU) Several UNAMID officials proposed deploying troops with minimum COE to the super camps as part of a "light deployment" or "rapid deployment" plan. These troops would be flown to Darfur via airlift, bringing just enough equipment for self-protection. Upon arrival, these troops would then focus on camp force protection as they wait for the arrival of their remaining COE. More troops would arrive at fewer locations, but "if applied, the goal of reaching 80% deployment by the end of 2008 might be possible," stated Medili. Medili stated that this is an "in-house" concept that has not yet been presented to troop contributing countries. Weiszegger noted that deploying troops in this manner will ultimately be a "military decision that may take some convincing." Military planner Stafford appeared pessimistic about this approach, noting that it could make many troops very vulnerable and "is probably not viable."

NIGHT FLIGHTS AND AIRPORT UPGRADES

17. (SBU) Public Information Officer Saiki stated that the GOS and UNAMID reached agreement "in principle" on allowing UNAMID night flights, "though it does come with a price tag." Almstrom also separately reported that negotiations over upgrades to the El-Geneina airport are ongoing and would soon allow access to the airport. (Note: Almstrom said he was not aware whether night

KHARTOUM 00001312 002 OF 004

flights were ongoing at the El-Fasher and Nyala airports. End Note.) Medili stated that while the airport upgrades will require an investment of money and time, the more complicating factor will be coordinating with the Sudanese Civil Aviation authority as it will maintain control of Darfur's airports and provide all of the Sudanese personnel needed to run an airport (e.g. flight control traffic managers, runway assistants, etc.). Overtime costs, complex staffing schedules, and the availability/willingness of Sudanese airport officials to staff the facilities after hours may all be more difficult issues than the physical upgrades to the airports. Medili stated that the current agreement between the GoS and UNAMID allows flights from 7 am until 7 pm and that Sudanese control of the airports is for obvious reasons a GOS requirement, as it would be in any country. Medili stated that upgrading the Geneina airport would give increased access to all of Darfur.

PHASE IV SECURITY AND EMERGENCY PLANNING

18. (SBU) All contacts stated that the approximately 300 non-essential staff were evacuated in July when UNAMID moved to phase IV security have returned to their positions in El-Fasher. Almstrom emphasized that this move to phase IV security would have occurred without the July ICC proceedings as the number of security incidents in the first six months of 2008 is already greater than all of 2007. However, he emphasized that despite their return, phase IV security is still in place and all employees are instructed to have a "go-bag" ready.

19. (SBU) Almstrom noted that Phase IV security and the potential for a formal ICC indictment against Bashir create an unpredictable situation. Almstrom commented, "You wonder what is the right thing to do, and I can tell you I'm not sleeping well at night thinking about a dark scenario where [following an ICC indictment] the GoS cuts off supply flights, and UNAMID runs out food and water within three days for its personnel." Medili noted that the Phase IV security will result in increased transportation costs for private Sudanese transportation contractors, as "risk is translated into financial terms." Day separately stated that Phase IV security will particularly affect the deployment of full police units "as staff ceilings have been put in place that will affect the civilian and police side." (Note: On August 28, DJSR rejected this assertion

saying that Phase IV security was not related to staff ceilings. Post will continue to look into this discrepancy. End Note.) Day noted that it is very difficult for the mission to drop from Phase IV security to a lower level. Describing it "as a distraction," Day noted that this security level is essentially the opposite from deployment.

STAFFING AND U.S. LIAISON OFFICERS

110. (SBU) Almstrom stated that current staffing for political and civil affairs positions stands at 50%. Almstrom added that the UN bureaucracy, while bringing necessary standards into the hiring process, is incredibly slow with "many bureaucratic hurdles." Almstrom stated that visa issuance "is getting better" for UNAMID personnel. He noted that the GoS appears to not/not be discriminating against visa applications from Western countries. Weiszegger differed with Almstrom, saying that the one exception to GoS cooperation on visas is for Australian, Canadian, and American military liaison officers. Almstrom stated that Western military observers/liaisons would be a great asset to UNAMID. Weiszegger agreed with Almstrom saying that although the GoS has been more responsive on many visas, it has not responded to visa requests for Canadian, Australian, and American force protection and military liaison positions. "They are probably taking a closer look into their backgrounds," speculated Weiszegger. Day stated that visas would be much easier to obtain for these military liaisons if "we forget to put their ranks on the visa applications as we did for the first two US liaison officers." (Comment: Day said he would pursue this with Almstrom, and Almstrom himself promised to follow up on the issue and get back to us. End comment.)

111. (SBU) DJSR Medili also emphasized the difficulty of recruitment and retention saying that it is important to create conditions in UNAMID camps and facilities so that civilian UN/AU staff will accept jobs and stay in them. He said that 70 new job offers were recently declined, "as candidates e-mail people they know here and they hear about the poor conditions." In an earlier meeting, Day separately told poloff that UNAMID needs an infusion of American talent at the senior-level of UNAMID. Day commented, "I'm the only American around here, and it shows - I spend two hours every day editing reports." Day noted that there is a plan to bring on several editors to help with this task in the long-term. Day stated that competent and experienced American logistics and transportation

KHARTOUM 00001312 003.2 OF 004

managers seconded to UNAMID would be a big addition to the hybrid force. Day also revealed that some talented Americans have been declined for important positions, as the UN bureaucracy reverse discriminates against Westerners and the "African character of the mission" is used in hiring decisions.

PAE

112. (SBU) DJSR Medili stated that PAE's contract for ongoing projects will officially end on September 14. After this date, PAE will only be allowed to start de-demobilizing and transitioning its projects to UNAMID. "De-mobilization does not mean leaving the hand-over process unfinished," noted Medili. PAE is currently working double shifts trying to complete its ongoing work. According to Medili, PAE complaints of GoS restrictions on PAE flights and visas are exaggerated, as a large number of PAE flights clog Darfur's limited airport capacity and some of their requests for visas came very late (e.g. for a soil stabilization expert.) Medili noted that UNAMID will attempt to directly hire approximately 500 PAE national staff when the company closes all of its operations in Sudan. Stafford described the end of PAE's contract as "a serious loss" and "body blow." Adam Day stated that since PAE now provides security for its own construction sites, UNAMID will lose more operational capacity when it takes over construction of PAE sites as it will be forced to use its existing troops for force protection. Day said that they have received three proposal for replacement contracts for PAE, but "the only one that is not American is a lot more expensive." Medili stated that there are a few outstanding issues with PAE, including a poorly constructed transit camp in Nyala. Medili emphasized that he was reluctant to discuss this issue in depth as the camp is entirely flooded and "this is one

issue with PAE that may very well have to be resolved with litigation," although he also said that there appears to be an agreement with DPKO to avoid any litigation and simply move on. Overall, these UNAMID interlocutors were very positive about the work that PAE has been able to accomplish.

PIPELINE

-- -- -- --
¶13. (SBU) DJSR Medili emphasized that there has been a noticeable improvement in the transportation pipeline from Port Sudan, specifically noting improved movement through customs, increased usage of railways and roads, and the use of more transportation contractors. Medili stated that the backlog of containers "will soon be resolved," and said that UNAMID is looking at some innovative ways to transport COE, including driving, rather than shipping, UNAMID vehicles coming from Port Sudan. Weiszegger stated that UNAMID just closed a competitive bidding on freight providers, receiving 18 bids, many of which he is confident will be able to provide service to UNAMID. Weiszegger also stated that UNAMID is considering hiring third-party full-service transportation logistics providers (offering customs clearance, storage and warehousing, and shipment to Darfur.) "There is capacity in the transportation market in Sudan that we need to tap into," stated Weiszegger. Weiszegger added that UNAMID will soon conduct a vendor market seminar to potential contractors in Nyala this week, and more in Khartoum and El-Fasher in the future.

HELICOPTERS

-- -- -- --
¶14. (SBU) Chief of Staff Almstrom emphasized that UNAMID unofficially uses its current helicopters for occasional surveillance and reconnaissance missions. He said that these transport helicopters are not designed for this, and that he questions this practice. Almstrom said that if UNAMID had attack helicopters, the July 8 attack UNAMID forces resulting in 8 deaths might not have happened. The attack lasted over two hours, noted Almstrom, and the attack helicopters could have made "quick work" of the force opposing UNAMID. With respect to UNAMID's need for attack helicopters, Saiki stated that UN standards require not only night flight capabilities but also the ability to operate in a hot, dusty, and harsh environment. (Note: His rationale for this is that since the attackers know that UNAMID has no helicopters, they can attack at any time. If UNAMID receives helicopters that do not have night flight capability, the attackers will know to attack only at night. End note.) This, in addition to the need for a competent crew and maintenance team, make the helicopter issue more complicated than just night capability, noted Saiki. Almstrom and Stafford noted that the patrol that was attacked July 8 was 100 kilometers from its base with only one radio and little support, which Stafford termed "insane" from an operational point of view, given the lack of air support. Chief of Planning Stafford noted that for deployment purposes, there is a need for three Ilyushin-76 airplanes more than helicopters. Stafford has already requested these air assets from New York and is awaiting a response.

KHARTOUM 00001312 004 OF 004

APCs

-- -- --
¶15. (SBU) Weiszegger said many of the Canadian armored personnel carriers (APCs) are approximately thirty years old and require constant maintenance by PAE and rare spare parts. He said that when PAE's service contract expires, UNAMID will attempt to hire PAE's local 500 local staff, something that PAE may consider despite a no-poaching clause in their contract. Hiring PAE's international staff is more complicated for UNAMID (due to non-poaching clauses in the contract with PAE,) but UNAMID is still attempting to hire some of the international staff on an individual basis. In the August 27 morning operations brief for General Agwai, J4 reported that although 77% of all APCs are serviceable, contingent-owned APCs have much lower serviceable rates. (Note: For example, the COE APC rate for South Darfur is at 43%. End Note.)

COMMENT

-- -- -- --
¶16. (SBU) Most UNAMID officials (with the exception of the outgoing

Day,) appeared more optimistic than several months ago with respect to deployment issues. The improved pipeline for shipments based on new contracts was especially positive, as previously UNAMID seemed to be in paralysis as to how to solve the problem of the 3000 containers (and 5000 shipments overall). Although very few of these senior UANMID officials are confident that they will reach a December 31st deployment goal of 80%, most appeared optimistic that this goal could be reached by March 2009. The "light deployment" or "rapid deployment plan" appears to serve little purpose, if only to bring more troops in to sit in large camps in major cities in Darfur. Despite their newfound optimism, UNAMID has great challenges that will require new energy, flexibility, and coordination with the GoS and member states. The lack of helicopters (both transport and attack) as well as the lack of formed police units (FPUs) and force protection to support them (septel) currently are the main obstacles to UNAMID achieving its core mission objectives.

ASQUINO